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Much of the criticism of NARP can be attributed to well-meaning rail supporters who either do not have a good understanding of NARP's activities or may have justifiable frustrations resulting from Amtrak activities that are frequently difficult to understand. However, Noel Braymer's letter in RTN 287 goes beyond this and represents either a lack of information or a display of irresponsibility to which NARP must reply.

Mr. Braymer states "half of the $13,000 raised for the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA marketing fund was skimmed by NARP headquarters" and finds this "most alarming." He questions whether this money went to pay off some of the debt caused by "mismanagement on the Getting There magazine fiasco." He asks what is being covered up and suggests that "legally such action comes very close to fraud."

Unfortunately, before writing his letter, Mr. Braymer failed to contact the NARP office or any NARP officers to gain a greater understanding relating to the charges he has made. Had Mr. Braymer taken the time to read NARP's June, 1983 funding appeal, he might have noted that my appeal letter explicitly stated that the contributions would "be put to immediate use for the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA advertising campaign AND FOR OTHER PROJECTS" (emphasis added). The decision to divide the proceeds from the June, 1983 appeal letter was made by the NARP Board before the appeal was undertaken. It was fully discussed at the April, 1983 Board meeting before being put to a vote that was overwhelmingly in favor of the decision. Mr. Braymer did not attend that Board meeting and has never requested a copy of the transcript from that Board meeting.

Braymer apparently also was unaware that NARP's Washington office spent considerable time advocating continuance of the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, including working with Congressional and Senatorial personnel including Senator Laxalt in an effort to save and possibly extend the train. He failed to acknowledge the amount of time that I personally spent trying to secure promotion of and other enhancements to the train, these activities beginning in Dec, 1982. Perhaps if he had taken the time to check he could have avoided these oversights.

Charges that NARP mismanaged what he characterizes as the Getting There magazine fiasco or suggestions that something is being covered up are frivolous. It is appropriate to note that most of the published criticism of NARP's experience with Getting There has come from persons other than the NARP directors or officers who took part in the deliberations that led to NARP offering Getting There and later to the decision to discontinue Getting There. As might be expected, factual accuracy has been noticeably absent from such writings—Braymer's letter suffers from the same deficiency. He did not request information about the Getting There decisions from any NARP officer or member of the Washington staff—inaccuracy is thus inevitable.

The decision to offer Getting There was an effort by the NARP Board to increase NARP's appeal to a broader spectrum of potential members. Getting There was offered without any increase in NARP's dues. Factoring in all of the costs of the operation of NARP and the additional costs resulting from Getting There, we recognized a need to add approximately 2000 additional members in order to cover the costs of Getting There. This was known in advance and was a calculated risk taken after careful assessment. Altho the membership increased, the increase attributable to Getting There, based upon surveys run during the summer of 1983, was inadequate to justify the additional cost. The Board, after extensive deliberation in Boston at our Fall, 1983 Board meeting decided that the cost exceeded the benefits and support for Getting There was discontinued.

John R. Martin, President
NARP
Washington, DC

I take exception to Dan Cartwright's remarks in RTN 287 wherein he feels that those who disagree with Graham Claytor are "irresponsible brats." Mr. Claytor may be a nice guy, but I, for one, don't agree with his present policies toward passenger service.

While Mr. Claytor has done a number of good things for Amtrak, the other side of the ledger would show some minuses, I'm afraid. Let me name just one.

It appalls me to see the opportunities Amtrak Marketing has missed. I live in an area rich in Indian and Hispanic history, yet I've never seen any Amtrak tour package promoting this area. What about Albuquerque's annual Balloon Festival? These are just two ideas from a myriad of happenings nationwide.

There seems to be a great reluctance by Marketing to do anything to promote what passenger service we have, let along adding any. Mr. Claytor, as Amtrak President, surely must know what is going on in his own Marketing Department. How long would I stay in business if I didn't explore every legal opportunity for expanding that business and making a profit?

I have always wondered why on Amtrak package tours Amtrak doesn't include themselves in the cost of the package with fares from three or four close major population centers. The transportation cost to and from is always listed as "in addition to." It seems to me that Amtrak would want to promote its own service by including transportation in the tour package.

No, Mr. Cartwright, we are not all "foamers" out to get Mr. Claytor! We do want him to take a close look at every opportunity to promote and improve Amtrak, and some of us feel this is not being done.

Orvis D. Scott
Gallup, New Mexico

Of the many interesting letters in RTN, I must say those in issue 287 were among the best I have ever read. I make exception to those by Noel Braymer, Bill Pollard, Dan Cartwright and Bruce Gilson.

The letters by Gilson and Cartwright are alarming. It appears that Mr. Gilson has a strong ally in Mr. Cartwright. Mr. Cartwright went too far overboard when he wrote that "Graham Claytor would guarantee a passenger train in everyone's driveway" and "wish to distance (himself) from the irresponsible elements in our midst." The latter quote points out clearly the dissension that is evident "in our midst." It would be in the better interest of all to come to an understanding and get on with the task of improving and expanding the Amtrak system. So long as the NE Corridor has preference over the national system, then there will be even more discord.

Messrs Braymer and Pollard along with Dr. Dan Mo aghan, Andy Selden and others will continue for expansion of the national system and have every good reason to take issue with the inept policies of Amtrak.

Henry DiVenuto
Macon, Georgia

I was glad to see RTN's response to Bruce Gilson's pro-NEC letter (RTN 287). Indeed, a simple passenger count will tell very little about the economic performance of a route. Using revenue per passenger or (even better) revenue per passenger mile is a more meaningful measure—as RTN suggests. But even these figures are misleading. We must somehow conside the cost side of the picture before any really useful statistic can emerge. Since at present all passenger trains operate at a loss (this does not have to be, but that is another story) most analysts have come to use loss per passenger mile as the most accurate device to describe today's rail passenger economics.

ON THE COVER

Under the gigantic Moreton Bay fig tree across the street from the Santa Barbara Amtrak station, the northbound COAST STARLIGHT pauses on St. Patrick's Day, March 17. Three Amtrak engines are powering the train this day, which is running about four minutes late. The famous fig tree from Australia, the limbs of which span approximately a city block, was planted there 107 years ago, in 1877. See elsewhere in this issue for more on a STARLIGHT trip to Santa Barbara. RTN photo.

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And speaking of this critical cost part of our economic equation, RTN may be on thin ice when it suggests that dining and lounge revenues should be added to total ticket income for long distance trains. Unfortunately, Amtrak must invest several taxpayers' dollars for each dollar it receives in dining car revenue—as the $60 million net annual food service loss shows. So in one sense, diner "revenues" exert a negative effect on the total income of long distance trains.

As anyone who has looked at the subject knows, passenger train costs, pricing, and economics is a very complex matter. RTN is to be commended for its continuing presentation of information and opinion in this interesting (and important) area. The "Letters" section has become my favorite part of RTN—keep up the good work!

James E. Cane
San Francisco, California

Amtrak President Claytor has said and done a number of things that I take issue with, but I don't believe any of his actions has enraged me quite as much as his remark, quoted by Bill Pollard in RTN 287, regarding the November derailment of the EAGLE near Marshall TX.

Graham Claytor says that, had no Amtrak station personnel been around (if he had his way they wouldn't have been) Missouri Pacific officials could have been counted on to handle matters. Mr. Claytor, having had at least some railroad experience, couldn't possibly be this naive. Anyone with any knowledge of the history of Amtrak's relations with the railroads knows that the Missouri Pacific has not been one of their big boosters. Granted, the situation has improved considerably from the time that Downing B. Jenks was at the helm. But even now the Mo-Pac's concern for Amtrak operations is limited to whatever it takes to earn their incentive payments for running trains on padded schedules.

I recently returned from NARP's Region IX meeting, held for the second consecutive year in Marshall TX. I am very much impressed with the efforts of the Amtrak station agents along the route of the EAGLE, and in addition many of the railroad crew members have rendered exemplary service. For years this route was one of the most neglected in the Amtrak system; Amtrak's efforts in its behalf still leave a great deal to be desired. I am firmly convinced that had it not been for the efforts of the aforementioned people, the EAGLE would not be running today. In many cases, thse people donated their own time and money to promoting Amtrak service.

To show just how highly Amtrak regards the efforts of these people, Graham Claytor has decided to eliminate their jobs. The fact that Claytor refuses to recognize the part that local station personnel had in handling the EAGLE derailment is indeed sad. I suppose he feels any praise for people whose jobs he wants to abolish will weaken his position.

Claytor's policy of downgrading station staffing and services is a classic example of false economy. Amtrak's service begins and ends at the depot. Amtrak fares are not cheap—a roundtrip ticket Marshall to Chicago with a deluxe bedroom is $501. It is ridiculous to assume that people who pay these prices will take kindly to waiting at an unmanned station, with no protection from the elements, which is presently the case in Marshall. The Marshall station situation is much improved from that of a couple of years ago, but this is thanks to the efforts of the good citizens of Marshall and local Amtrak employees.

The biased nature of Amtrak's current station criteria has been pointed out in previous issues of RTN. It's really hard to pin Amtrak down on what their criteria for closing a station are. The criteria can change as often as the weather; even if a station meets the criteria, it doesn't prevent downgrading. Amtrak unmanned the Santa Fe station in Galesburg IL in spite of very good passenger loadings.

Whatever criteria Amtrak may use to unman stations, there seems to be none for manning those that are presently not staffed. Marshall has been seeking an agent for its stop. Amtrak's response was to attempt to unman the stations at Longview and Texarkana, which would have left Little Rock as the only staffed station between St. Louis and Dallas.

I departed Marshall on the northbound EAGLE, Sunday Mar 10, and at least 15-20 non-NARP passengers boarded the train that night. I was told that this was not an unusual load. The stop clearly rates at least an open waiting room and should have an agent.

Amtrak seems to think that travel agents can take the place of agents. Altho many travel agents do a good job of selling Amtrak tickets, there are also many who don't. There have been too many stories of travel agents doing everything from overcharging customers to using bogus reservation numbers when space is not available. No travel agents ever come down to the depot to help the elderly or handicapped with their luggage, keep the restroom clean, or answer questions about why the train is late. Also, as NARP Director-at-Large Dan Monaghan pointed out, no travel agents showed up to help the passengers when the EAGLE derailed.

We must do everything we can to stop further unwarranted station staffing reductions. I don't think Claytor and company have given up on this issue. They're simply regrouping for the next attack. Claytor very recently made a remark about his desire to eliminate checked baggage service. The elimination of this service would probably be used to justify more unstaffed stations. A NARP member at the Marshall meeting made the remark that Claytor's motto is "A penny saved is a penny saved."

Wayne Copple
Director, NARP Region IX
Chairman, MOKSRail
Kansas City, Missouri

Bruce Gilson's letter (RTN 287) demands a reply, even at the risk of further polarizing rail advocates over the Corridor vs. long-haul debate. In Mr. Gilson's letter, a comparison was drawn between the Dec 1983 ridership of the New England Metroliners and the Chicago-Texas EAGLE.

I believe that a more detailed analysis of New England Metroliner versus EAGLE ridership would produce a conclusion quite different from the pro-Northeast Corridor conclusions offered by Mr. Gilson. For example, the 6433 passengers carried (Dec 1983) on the New England Metroliners represented the effects of a million-dollar Amtrak marketing blitz, the advantages of multiple daily departures, and the advantages of having other conventional trains on the route which gave potential travelers even greater scheduling flexibility on round trips. Despite these apparent advantages, the New England Metroliners achieved a ridership level which was less than two-thirds of the ridership level for the EAGLE.

During this comparison period, the EAGLE operated tri-weekly for two weeks and then began operating daily for the Christmas holiday season. The daily Christmas operation was totally ignored by Amtrak Marketing, and was frequently misrepresented as being only tri-weekly by Amtrak CRO clerks. In addition to the tri-weekly versus daily confusion, the EAGLE had to overcome less than optimum scheduling and the legendary circuitous routing in Texas. Even with these handicaps, the EAGLE greatly outperformed the New England Metroliners. Had the EAGLE route been the beneficiary of an Amtrak marketing effort commensurate to that in the Northeast, and had the EAGLE been routinely operating daily, the ridership levels would have been unmanageable due to equipment shortages.

The question that must be asked is: why does Amtrak continue to ignore the national system, which generates 80% of Amtrak's revenue passenger miles and 75% of Amtrak's revenue? I suspect that a large part of the reluctance of Amtrak management to restructure their priorities is due to their overwhelming endorsement of the NE Corridor in years past. To significantly change priorities now would be to admit to a serious error of judgment in the past. Amtrak's previous disinterest in preserving Superliner construction machinery and already assembled Superliner structural components would be viewed as gross incompetence, and the corporation's continuing efforts to sell off hundreds of mechanically sound post-war Budd cars might be viewed as true negligence.

Those of us outside the Northeast do not begrudge that region its trains. The masses of people to be moved in the NEC dictate the retention of rail service, even tho that argument must be made more on the basis of welfare railroading than on the basis of generating net revenue. We do strongly resent Amtrak's infatuation with NEC service while long-haul routes languish. We object to Amtrak marketing's fixation on the NEC while ignoring potentially high-revenue long-haul markets thruout the nation. And, we are determined to break the double standard whereby tri-weekly service is adequate and once-daily frequency is a luxury on long-haul routes, but where half-hourly frequencies are essential in the NE Corridor.

Bill Pollard
NARP Director, Region IX
Conway, Arkansas

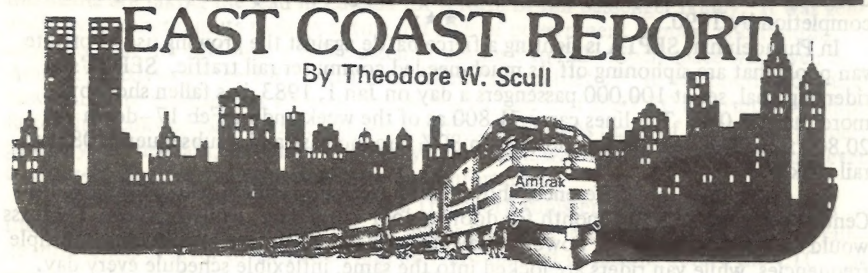
Mr. Willis James' proposal to have a Winnipeg link to the EMPIRE BUILDER (RTN 287) is an excellent idea. I have one criticism of his plan, namely a train with no food service. How many people will want to get off the EMPIRE BUILDER at 5am, sit in the station until 6am, and then ride for four hours, 45 minutes with nothing to eat or drink? Food service must exist here.

I hope his suggestion, with this one change, will be taken seriously by Amtrak or VIA or both.

Samuel E. Stokes, Jr.
Alstead, New Hampshire

EAST COAST REPORT

By Theodore W. Scull



Starting March 15, the Long Island Rail Road began a one-year test of passenger-operated ticket vending machines at Penn Station to help alleviate some of the long lines at the ticket windows during peak travel periods.

Passengers are able to buy peak and off-peak one-way, senior citizen and half-fare tickets from City Zone 1 to all 128 Long Island stations. One hundred buttons, color-coded to the branch timetables, list the stations in order from west to east. The Swiss-manufactured ticket dispensers, about the size of a soft drink machine, will accept $1 and $5 bills and coins ranging from nickels to Susan B. Anthony dollars. I shall describe how well they function when I make my next LIRR trip.

★★★

The day after I filed the last East Coast Report describing the power problems that Metro-North, but not the LIRR, was experiencing with the new batch of Budd-built M-3 electric commuter cars, the LIRR announced that it had halted the delivery of its order for 174 units. Apparently, the rigid shoes that extend from the truck to the top of the third rail become separated when the train rounds a curve. The train then loses

power, and if the distance is too great, a surge of power can develop, causing some electrical damage. There is no timetable for resolving the problem, one that Metro-North does not have, as its shoes run along the underside of the third rail. The LIRR has a current roster of 764 electric and 250 diesel cars, and carries 265,000 riders on an average weekday. At present, about 5000 of these have to stand.

★★★

Land closures in tunnels and on bridges leading into Manhattan, lasting months in some cases, and spread over the next couple of years, will further aggravate vehicular congestion, according to transportation officials. Years of neglect, when New York City was on the verge of bankruptcy, affect motorists as well as subway and bus riders. No significant shift to mass transit has been predicted.

★★★

RTN reader Douglas John Bowen, a Hoboken resident who commutes daily into Manhattan, had a major article published March 18 in the New Jersey section of the New York Times, advocating the Hoboken Terminal as the most logical base for a revived ferry service across the Hudson to Manhattan. He cited the saturation of the vehicular crossings and the PATH system to justify the ferry service, then carefully eliminated the other proposals for landings in Jersey City and Weehawken. Hoboken, he said, can best handle the prople arriving by existing NJ Transit trains and buses, and by car because of good road access and if a large parking lot gets constructed on the site of the unused rail freight yards just to the south of the terminal in Jersey City. Bowen's proposal is certainly the most thoughtful one that I have yet seen in print.

★★★

A seventh victim of the Penn Station sniper has now been identified. On May 18, 1983 a night fire-watchman who worked in what was then the New York Statler was shot in the hand while making his rounds in the hotel's second basement level. The man no longer works at the hotel, now called the New York Penta, and he has since recovered from his wounds.

★★★

In Washington, the long-stalled Green Line construction received approval on March 7 after a federal judge's ruling. The route of the line after Anacostia has yet to be decided, but officials say that construction could begin as early as Sep 1984, with completion by 1990.

★★★

In Philadelphia, SEPTA is fighting a fierce battle against the growing use of private van pools that are siphoning off its much-needed commuter rail traffic. SEPTA's ridership goal, set at 100,000 passengers a day on Jan 1, 1983, has fallen short by more than 28,000. The lines carry 71,800 as of the week ending Feb 17—down 20,800 from two years ago, following an 80% fare increase and a subsequent 108-day rail strike.

One example of fare differences shows that a Hatboro resident who commutes into Center City pays $62.50 a month for door-to-door van service, while a SEPTA Trailpass would cost $95. The trains, however, have the added advantage of providing multiple frequencies, while van riders are locked into the same, inflexible schedule every day.

SEPTA official Eugene Skoropowski sees the rail system winning back some of its lost riders when some of the major road construction projects get underway, especially on the Schuylkill Expressway that is due for a major rebuilding next year. Main Line motorists who have no other high-speed routes into the city may turn to the "Paoli Local." In addition, the Labor Day opening of the tunnel connection between Suburban Station and the Reading Terminal will double the potential destinations for riders of the former PRR and Reading lines. The rail line to and from Philadelphia's International Airport also opens that day.

★★★

Resorts International has been granted permission from the Casino Control Commission to build the Atlantic City train station. The station, to be completed by Sep 1985, was originally planned to have passengers enter thru the casino's main doors; however, objections raised have changed all that. One feature of the plan, as reported by the Associated Press, calls for two platforms and five tracks, which makes one wonder what a passenger steps onto or into when arriving on Track 5!

RAIL CANADA

VIA RAIL CANADA'S 1983 annual report has just appeared. The most important fact that the passenger train system sought to put over in the report is that government grants for VIA in 1983 were only 4.5% higher than in 1982—less than the rate of inflation. (Originally, VIA estimated it would need 22% more than in 1982.) VIA Chairman Harold Renouf said, "Major factors contributing to this very positive result include the decline in inflation and the commitment of VIA's board and management to a bottom-line philosophy." However, he noted that VIA is not offering optimum service to the public yet. "The rail passenger service that Canadians own today is much less a reflection of what rail can offer than a legacy of those decades of decline and disincentives which preceded VIA's incorporation... The services VIA is now able to offer fall far short of the potential to be won by high-speed service. But the capital costs of such new services are substantial." VIA President Pierre Franche echoed these sentiments, and added that "(Modernization) can and must be done." VIA'S financial review in the report shows that passenger revenue and passenger revenue per psgr mile were at a new high—$173,325,000 and 10.8¢ respectively. But total ridership was at a new low—of 6,734,000, as were train miles operated, a statistic which has been steadily declining since VIA took over in 1979. Car miles operated were also at a new low of 71,761,000 compared to 105,867,000 in 1979. Average psgr miles/train mile increased to 128 after declining to 127 in 1982 (1981 was VIA'S highest, with 132).

A BLIZZARD SWEPT southwestern Ontario the weekend of Mar 10-11, and several VIA train became stuck in the snow—all RDC runs whose motors became clogged. The media made much of VIA's refusal to replace these runs with engine-hauled trains or to plow ahead of passenger trains, despite requests from conductors. Most delays ran about 2-3 hours each.

THE FAILED PROMISE of the LRC equipment was discussed in a full-page article in the Mar 12 Toronto Globe and Mail. The article seems to be another way in which the media are taking the lead in Canada for reform of rail passenger policy. It was generally sympathetic in its tone, pointing out lack of government support and funding, implying that the LRC was a noble attempt doomed to fail. Much space was given to Amtrak's analysis of the LRC which was called "sympathetic." It was pointed out that new trains are meaningless without proper tracks, and that the LRC can run only 5mph faster than conventional trains, and less reliably. Much was made of the failure-prone gadgetry on the train, especially the tilt system which was seen as unnecessary and even counter-productive, making passengers uncomfortable.

QUEBEC'S MICHEL CLAIR, pro-rail Transport Minister, has been transferred to the post of Treasury Board Chairman, a senior position. Michel Leonard, also pro-rail—he intervened in favor of Le Petit Train du Nord on past occasions before the CTC—has replaced Clair in the Transport portfolio. This cabinet shuffle was long delayed (Clair's move to another ministry was predicted here in RTN several months ago).

THE POPE'S VISIT to Canada will entail two special VIA trains run Sep 9, 1984 from Ste-Anne de Beaupre to Montreal, with a stop in Trois Rivieres.

VIA SYSTEM COMPUTER message of Mar 2: The Skyline (dome coffee shop car) will soon be introduced on the Eastern Transcon, trains 14-15, between Montreal and Halifax, as well as on the Western Transcon Montreal-Vancouver, replacing the dining and sleeper-lounge cars on the Eastern Transcon and the diner on the Western Transcon, during off-peak season only. The reason being considerable savings. There will be no adverse effects on employees presently assigned. The dining car staff will be assigned to the dining section of the Skyline and the steward waiters presently assigned to the lounge or the sleeper-lounge will continue serving refreshments and continental breakfast in the lounge area of the Skyline. A modified Skyline car operated as the only meal service car on train 1 out of Montreal on Feb 13 and returning on train 2 out of Vancouver on Feb 18, as test runs.

THE CANADIAN'S FOOD downgrading will, according to a late report, take place this fall and at other non-peak travel times. At those times, the Skyline car will serve as the diner-lounge. CARA Operations Ltd. will be the sole supplier of food for VIA at all locations; the switch to CARA was made Mar 12 at Vancouver. CARA serves the airlines and runs station restaurants and newsstand/gift shops. As of Apr 14,the name "CANADIAN" will be used from Toronto west only, but thru sleepers for the train will start at Montreal. The train has been reported as running all Budd stainless-steel cars west of Winnipeg, with only the Dayniter car being an exception east of Winnipeg.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION reportedly recommends that the White Pass and Yukon railway reopen this year.

DIESEL ENGINE 4070, an FP7A, has emerged from the shops with new number 1300, and in the CTCUM paint scheme. It was the star of the movie "Silver Streak."

VIA RAIL CANADA has become the third major corporation to announce its participation in Expo '86.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

SAN JOSE'S LIGHT RAIL project had a groundbreaking ceremony Mar 23, with the dynamiting of a house that was to be cleared away to make way for the 21-mile line that will serve San Jose and "Silicon Valley." Service is expected to start in 1987.

BART RIDERSHIP hit a new high in March, with 5,149,677 passengers riding. The previous record for one month was 4,968,974 in August 1983. This March showed a 9.1% increase over March 1983.

ST. LOUIS'S LIGHT RAIL project got a push when the Gateway Coordinating Council in March approved the 18-mile line which is to connect East St. Louis, St. Louis and Lambert Airport. In addition Missouri and Illinois Congressmen have sent a letter to DOT Secretary Dole urging DOT funding for the system.

UMTA'S NEW RULES for determining which transit systems will get funding will be published soon. An Apr 1 NY Times article discussed them, pointing out that they favor the Sun Belt cities and give less weight to older cities of the Northeast; for example, the Buffalo light rail system is not among the top 12 candidates. UMTA told the Times the Administration favors cities in which local matching funding is available—preferably 50%. Systems scoring highest on the new rules were Seattle, Los Angeles, San Jose and Atlanta, the Times said.

CALTRANS SHUTTLE BUS will begin operation May 1, connecting the Peninsula Caltrain station at 4th and Townsend in San Francisco with the downtown area, so that commuters can avoid the unpredictable and slower Muni buses. About 15 or 20 express buses, leased from AC Transit, will run from the Caltrain station to the Ferry Building, the Financial District and the Civic Center. Caltrain riders with monthly commute tickets can get discounts that would cut in half the cost of the crosstown bus transfer.

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD has begun the first part of a 6-month evaluation study for the best transportation system for the Mineola-Glen Cove-Oyster Bay Corridro, the railroad said in an Apr 3 announcement. Market research will begin the study. One factor to be examined is the feasibility of converting the Oyster Bay Branch of the LIRR into a transit corridor in conjunction with the Mineola Grade Crossing Elimination Program. It will also look at the feasibility of a light rail line from Oyster Bay south to Valley Stream.

THE FLXIBLE CORPORATION is America's leading maker of buses, with 38% of the market, despite the many problems with its infamous model 870 bus. Its latest model, the Metro, is reportedly improved over the 870 and achieving success in many locations. These interesting facts come from a detailed review of the Flxible bus released by Associated Press and appeearing in newspapers on Apr 1.

THE ORLANDO SENTINEL asked its readers whether a rapid transit system should be built in the Orlando area. The responses, reported in the Mar 27 edition, showed that 61% of the readers didn't want such a system. They received 1950 responses in all.

★ A COVER CORRECTION ★

I loved the cover picture on RTN 288. However, a minor correction is needed—the car depicted is not a Skytop parlor-observation, but rather is a Skytop sleeper-lounge. Let me explain.

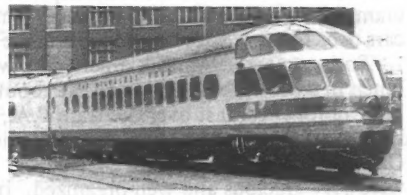
Milwaukee Road built four Skytop parlor-observations, in its own shops, and named them in the "Rapids" series, like "Cedar Rapids", "Coon Rapids", etc. The cars served almost exclusively on the Morning and Afternoon Hiawatha trains Chicago-Milwaukee-St. Paul-Minneapolis. As each trainset made only one one-way trip per day, four of these Skytop parlor-observations were needed to maintain a daily service—a Morning Hiawatha and an Afternoon Hiawatha westbound, and a similar set eastbound.

The Skytop sleeper-lounges, in the "Creek" series, such as "Alder Creek" and "Gold Creek", included eight double bedrooms and they operated on the OLYMPIA HIAWATHA Chicago-Twin Cities-Seattle-Tacoma. They can be distinguished from the parlor Skytops by the additional "strake" of windows cut into the ceiling—which shows on RTN's cover just ahead of the post supporting the depot roof.

That cover photo, of course, must be the OLYMPIAN HIAWATHA, as it depicts Three Forks, Montana, the Milwaukee's passenger gateway to Yellowstone National Park (NP gateway was Livingston MT). Originally, the Skytop sleeper-observation lounge cars operated from Chicago to Puget Sound, but after consolidation of the westbound OLYMPIAN with the Afternoon Hiawatha in the late 1950s, and the eastbound OLYMPIAN with the Morning Hiawatha from Minneapolis, the sleeper Skytops operated Puget Sound-Twin Cities only. This happened as there was not room for two Skytops on one train, and Milwaukee preferred to use the parlor Skytops east of the Twin Cities rather than the sleeper Skytops.

With the demise of the OLYMPIAN as a thru train to Seattle in May, 1961, the sleeper Skytops were stored, and later sold to Canadian National in time for their passenger resurgence under Chairman Donald Gordon and passenger genius Pierre Delagrave. Their first major Canadian appearance was on the OCEAN and SCOTIAN runs between Montreal and Halifax. It was in the Maritime territory that the first real testing of the new passenger promotional concepts was tried—such as red-white-&-blue fares, and improved dining car services, with food included in the ticket prices.

Later, as this surge slackened following Delagrave's departure from CN, and also the death thereafter of Donald Gordon (a truly "bigger than life" personality in the railroad world) the cars received less prominence. They were taken off the Halifax trains, and three were placed on the shorter CHALEUR runs east from Montreal, and another three went to Jasper to become attached to the rear of the then-unnamed "Rupert Rocket", which required three sets of equipment for a daily summer Jasper-Prince Rupert round-trip. In the winter, the "Rocket's" Skytop sleepers became posh observation cars on the rear of the afternoon Rapido on the Toronto-Montreal run, offering bedrooms as private accommodations for businessmen wishing the opportunity to work undisturbed en route.



Skytop parlor-observation car.

These cars were built of cor-ten steel, and of course were subject to aging that a stainless steel car does not face. In addition, it was reported that Canadian safety officials wanted the cars removed from CN service as they did not have sufficient "escape" capacity, lacking a rear door over the couplers. In a difficult situation (as in a derailment with the forward vestibule buried in mud or water), escape from an ailing Skytop would theoretically have been more difficult.

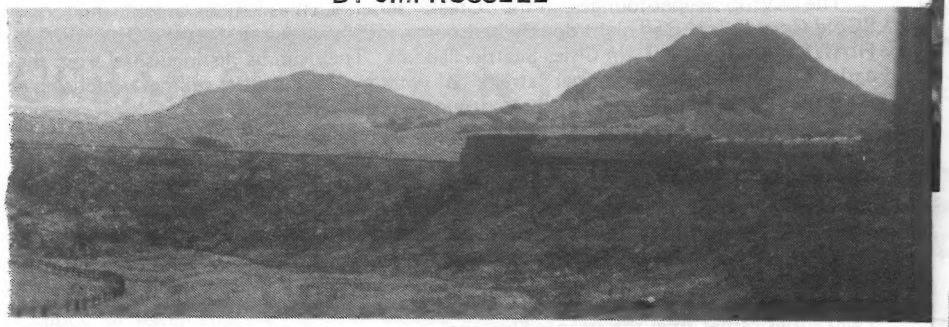
As with several other American car designs of the 1940s and 1950s bordering on genius (dome cars, slumbercoaches), the Skytop design is one deserving of perpetuation. In some future Amtrak car order, where intelligence (rather than a slender IQ) is involved,

part of the order should include cars of the Skytop design, just as such an order should include new Budd-type dome coaches, Budd-type slumbercoaches, and "theme" buffet-lounge cars such as NP's Traveller's Rest, GN's "Ranch" cars, and the cable-car theme found on the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR.

It may well be that the surviving Skytop cars will serve to keep this design alive thru our current "dark ages" in the field of passenger car design and construction in the U.S., just as the church kept language and learning alive during the European Dark Ages following the fall of Rome. —Glenn Lee.

St. Pat's at St. Barbara's

BY JIM RUSSELL



What more enjoyable outing could one plan for a sunny mid-March weekend than a trip along the Pacific Coast on Amtrak's COAST STARLIGHT? In this case our trek was from Oakland to Santa Barbara and back, a quick tour of some of the best ocean and hills Amtrak has to offer.

Our train 11 was into Oakland from points north 20 minutes late, and we departed 29 minutes late after the two Amtrak engines were changed for three other Amtrak units and an SP diesel on the point. Why we needed four engines we did not know, but probably these arrangements were caused by shifting engine assignments on the route, including the need to juggle around the RENO FUN TRAIN power.(Most of the STARLIGHT trainsets we saw that weekend carried more than the normal two units, and they were often assisted by SP engines.)

Our seat for the southbound trip was in coach-baggage car 31044, with its more cramped seating and lack of legrests. Amtrak has begun a program to change these cars over to more spacious, long-distance seating.

Trying to avoid Amtrak diner food, we had eaten an early breakfast and had brought lunch in a brown bag. However, at about 10am, when the dining car steward made a last call for breakfast over the train P.A., we couldn't resist the temptation to go seek a little more nourishment and check out the diner. We were glad we did, it turned out. Our order of fresh eggs fried over lightly came prepared just right. The dining car crew were very gracious and well-organized. It was one of the best dining car experiences we've had in some time.

Back in our coach-baggage, car attendant John Parker was keeping busy every minute. When he wasn't busy answering questions, handing out pillows or finding bandages in his first-aid kit, he used his carpet sweeper on the car floors.

Outside our car windows, the lush green hills of vernal California eased by. It was still early for the big spring wildflower display—that should come from mid-April to

(Photo above: The editor's southbound STARLIGHT rounds the famous horseshoe curve above San Luis Obispo. Note the four engines, with an SP unit in the lead. This photo was taken thru a Superliner window.

(Page 11:) The northbound train on St. Patrick's Day pauses at the Santa Barbara station to exchange passengers. The Spanish Mission-style station (at far left) has recently been repainted. Photos by the author.

mid-May—but many fields of yellow mustard danced by under the clear blue skies.

For lunch we purchased beverages from the snack counter in the lower level of the Sightseer lounge, to accompany our homemade sandwiches. Shortly after 2:30, after we'd left San Luis Obispo, the dining steward came on the P.A. to announce that the diner was out of hot dogs and chicken salad and tuna salad sandwiches, but that a continuous lunch would be served for the remainder of the trip—no dinner.

We'd been gaining some time, but then at 2:40 we stopped in a siding to wait for northbound train 14. We cooled our heels for 24 minutes there before the train finally breezed by us on the left. As a consequence, we were about 45mins late into Santa Barbara. This lateness was the only negative feature of our trip, but it nearly caused us to miss out on some important plans we'd made for our arrival. The passengers were clearly becoming very ancy during the long wait on the siding south of San Luis, and we felt that SP dispatchers somehow could have done a better job of meeting the two trains. (There was scarcely any freight traffic observed during the trip, and SP had only the two Amtrak trains to deal with.)

Our train had been full, and business was certainly brisk around Santa Barbara this weekend. The weather was like summer (compared with spring in Northern California).

Our return trip left Santa Barbara pretty much on time, under even clearer blue skies. This time we sat in a regular Superliner coach, with plenty of leg room—and even more than usual, since we sat just behind the stairwell partition, so there was no seat in front of us. This train was run just as nicely as the first, with the crew all mannerly and devoted to their jobs.

At 3:00 o'clock an announcement was made that after San Luis an employee would go thru the train and take dinner reservations for 4:30, 5:00, 6:00, etc. This was done, and it proved to be an eminently sensible system that worked beautifully. We chose a

6:00pm reservation, and at that hour we had only to walk to the diner and present our reservation slip in order to be seated. At dinner we had an interesting conversation with a young Mexican-American woman who, with her pre-school daughter, was traveling to Sacramento to have her final American citizenship papers bestowed upon her. Once again, the diner experience was very pleasant, and the food was quite acceptable.

This trip was our first experience with Amtrak's new smoking regulations. The major change for the Superliners was the prohibition on smoking in the center section of the Sightseer lounge, and in the lower part of the car, except for the end that formerly was the piano bar. About half of the lounge is now non-smoking—the center section which is set off from the ends by two small plastic partitions. The partitions don't really confine the smoke, but the result is a great improvement in the breathability of the car's air.

We were surprised that on this trip the train crew called out points of interest over the P.A. Northbound, the crew told the train that we were stopping to meet the southbound STARLIGHT. We did stop for about 10 minutes, but moved on without its passing. A little later, at 3:07, we met the train at speed five minutes out of San Luis, carrying an SP engine on the front.

Leaving San Luis, we went thru the interesting series of tunnels on the Questa Grade. Not far beyond the last one, at 4pm, we passed a small ranch close to the tracks on the

(continued on page 19)

WORLD'S FAIR STEAM

UP'S 8444 COMES TO NEW ORLEANS

BY ADRON F. HALL

The Union Pacific System on March 9 embarked on an unprecedented rail odyssey which was to cover 1900 miles from Cheyenne, Wyoming to New Orleans, with stops in 34 cities and towns. The train was powered by UP's steam giant, engine 8444, the star of their journey of great public relations thru six states and to the Louisiana World Exposition. The engine will continue in its starring role at the World's Fair as the feature attraction in UP System's "Rivers of Steel" pavilion. The pavilion will include other railroad displays and will have a 150-seat theater showing the film "Rivers of Steel."

The train's route was: Mar 9, Cheyenne to North Platte; Mar 10, North Platte to Omaha (UP's home offices); Mar 11, Omaha to Kansas City; Mar 12, Kansas City to Kirkwood Station; Mar 13, Kirkwood to St. Louis (MoPac's home offices), thence to Chester, Illinois, on the Cotton Belt, and back across the Mississippi River to Poplar Bluff and Little Rock, Arkansas; Mar 14, Little Rock to Alexandria, Louisiana; Mar 15, Alexandria to New Orleans.

This correspondent joined the train at Little Rock. The consist for the final two days' run to New Orleans included engine 8444, eight yellow UP cars and blue MoPac office car 8. The UP cars were: 904304 (tool-baggage), 304 (dorm), 5716 (recording-baggage), 5486 (coach), 9004 (dome lounge), 5000 (diner-lounge), sleepers 1607 "Sun Point", 1612 "Sun Villa", office car "Omaha" and car 8

This delightful variety of cars was used along the route to entertain officials and invited guests in the many towns and cities in which the train stopped. The several UP and MP officials aboard included Mr. Joe McCartney, General Director, Public Relations and Advertising for UP, and Mr. Paul Watkins of MoPac, St. Louis. These gentlemen, along with people from the World's Fair staff enjoyed their tasks of welcoming visitors aboard and explaining to them about the uniqueness of their train and its purpose at its destination.

(Above:) A crowd of youngsters of all ages gathers around the great steamer at its stop at Monroe LA on March 14.

(At right:) The special train crosses the Huey P. Long Bridge into New Orleans on March 15.

All photos by Jim Selzer.

Upon leaving Little Rock, 8444 blazed a new trail for the railroad by being the first train to use newly-constructed trackage from the MoPac's Pike Street Yard across the Arkansas River, by the Amtrak station, thence onto ex-Rock Island tracks and cutting a crescent south of the city thru the Rock's Biddle Yard and then back on the MoPac to depart on their line to Pine Bluff. Construction crews were all around, and some of the rail had just been spiked into place.

At the larger cities along the route—i.e., Pine Bluff; Monroe LA; Alexandria LA; Addis (Baton Rouge); and New Orleans—the crowds were large, and TV, radio and newspaper reporting teams were covering the exciting event. In smaller towns, people were out in force, waving and cheering as we chugged thru at a slow speed, or whizzed by at about 60mph. Many, however, unaware of the approaching "time machine", were visibly taken aback, others jumping with arms waving. In some sparsely populated areas, people literally came out of the woods. Most towns had school children lining adjacent streets, some waving, others holding banners reading "Welcome 8444." At McGehee, Arkansas, where the engine was serviced, the town appeared to be on holiday —school had been let out and every child in town was present. Many were fortunate to climb aboard the engine and see 8444's big "control deck."

In Monroe LA the 8444's engineer, Bob Neeley, was interviewed by a TV reporter and he related how they had traveled thru snow for four days, but were now enjoying the sunny 70° temperatures of Louisiana. He was asked how many times he pulled the whistle cord, and he said, "Oh, thousands of times." Then he explained how the steam whistle affected people in many ways. Ironically, upon departing Alexandria the next morning, we were delayed about 15 minutes because the whistle cord broke.

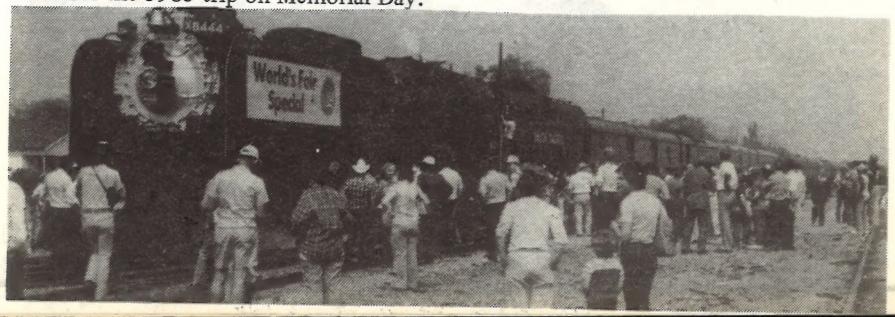
The 8444 was built in 1944, the last steam engine for UP. She could run 100mph on passenger trains and pulled such well-known trains as the OVERLAND LIMITED and PORTLAND ROSE. The engine has a 4-8-4 wheel arrangement and with its 14-wheel tender weighs in at 907,980 pounds. This was its first journey into the South and also first venture onto MoPac trackage since the UP-MP merger.

To enter New Orleans, 8444 had to cross the famous Huey P. Long Bridge across the Mississippi River. Here the engine was quite a spectacle, puffing voluminous black smoke and engineer Neeley blowing the mighty steam whistle for all the surrounding world below to hear. The bridge also accommodates vehicular traffic, rush hour was in progress, so hundreds of homeward-bound motorists were treated to a rare sight.

The locomotive's final parade to the World's Fair site was along New Orleans Public Belt Railroad, accompanied by two hi-railer pickup trucks on adjacent tracks. This final 16-mile stretch was sandwiched between the Mississippi River levee and port warehouses on one side, and New Orleans' historic narrow streets and "shotgun houses" on the other.

At the World's Fair site, the passenger cars were dropped on UP's Fair house tracks (to be used by visiting UP office cars during the six months of the Fair). After a hospitality hour for local dignitaries in the dome lounge and diner lounge, the party proceeded to the entrance to UP's pavilion. Speeches were made, a signal was given, engineer Neeley gave two blasts on his whistle and began to nudge 8444 into her six-month resting place. Balloons erupted from behind the engine, a New Orleans brass band played, and the 8444 stopped with one last long blast from the whistle. This was a signal for the commencement of a spectacular fireworks display over the Fair, a fitting last event of a great journey as twilight settled over the Crescent City.

As a postscript, it seems the UP System is in business to operate many special movements. Already since the merger, several special trains have operated over the MP into New Orleans, including the Operation Lifesaver Special (RTN 287). Just the day before 8444's arrival, a director's special ran from Little Rock to New Orleans and then was off to Houston. One of the lounge attendants aboard the 8444 train was flying from New Orleans to Portland, Oregon to work on UP's "Jr. Old Timers' Special" to Las Vegas. Mr. John Bromley, UP's Director, Media Relations, said they have 61 pieces of passenger equipment including 10 coaches and 16 office cars. MP has eight office cars. UP is rebuilding one E-8 locomotive and will run a 6900 Centennial loco Denver to Borie for the 3985 trip on Memorial Day.



DAYLINER CRASH REPORT IS ISSUED

The following is the text of a Mar 30 press release from the Canadian Transport Commission:

"The CTC in a decision released today has indicated that the responsibility for the fatal, Mar 23, 1983, Edmonton-Calgary dayliner accident should be borne by CP Rail management and employees. ...

"The accident which occurred near Carstairs, Alta., and took the lives of four passengers and the locomotive engineer, was the result of a number of factors...

"The cause of the collission was a misaligned and unattended switch, which diverted the dayliner into a storage track where it struck four empty tank cars. The switch had been left open by a CP Rail work gang. The severity of the crash was due to the speed of the VIA Rail dayliner which was estimated to be traveling at least 30mph faster than the restricted speed limit for the area. Had the dayliner engineer and conductor, both CP Rail employees, obeyed the 30mph slow order for the area, the harshness of the accident would have been substantially less, the decion said.

"The dayliner's 'deadman pedal', a safety control feature, was known not to be functioning properly when it left the Calgary shop a day before the accident. This was known to the CP Rail shop manager, altho the dayliner was allowed to go into service. However, this situation would probably not have altered significantly the severity of the accident. The foot pedal has to be engaged by the locomotive engineer to allow the train to move, and if it is disengaged the brakes will automatically apply and the engine will shut down.

"The decision said that the indirect cause of the accident was a 'lax attitude of a number of CP Rail employees with respect to adherence to rules, orders, practices and procedures designed to ensure safe passage.' It said CP Rail management and supervision 'must bear the responsibility' for this situation because it is their responsibility not only to ensure employees are knowledgeable and competent, but that they also 'enforce rigid adherence' to the rules.

"As a result of the findings of the Commission panel, which held 12 days of public hearings at Calgary in July thru Nov 1983, the Commission will order that all railway employees be restricted from handling main track switches unless qualified in the Uniform Code of Operating Rules (UCOR). The Commission will also instruct CP Rail senior management to put into effect a 'rigorous verification process' for railway employees.

"The Commission will direct VIA Rail, in consultation with CP Rail and CN, to work towards establishing uniform standards of maintenance and inspection for dayliner equipment. The Commission will also develop and implement a nationwide air brake inspection program for dayliners. In addition, the Commission will order the installation of event recorders on all VIA Rail trains so that concrete evidence pertaining to the circumstances surrounding accidents can be known. It will direct VIA Rail to provide restraints to overhead baggage racks to minimize the risk of luggage falling on passengers during an accident."

BULLET TRAIN PROMOTERS CHANGE ESTIMATES & ROUTE PLANS

American High Speed Rail Corporation (AHSRC) on Mar 27 announced "refined" projections for Bullet Train revenues and ridership for the L.A.-San Diego route.

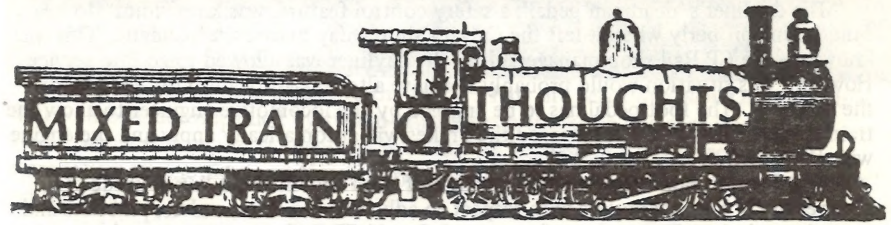
Said AHSRC, "The new research projects a range of ridership and revenues, with a central projection about 100,000 riders per day and first-full-year revenues of about $380 million (1982 dollars) for the high-speed train. This central projection lies near the center of a range of forecasts approximately 20% higher and lower. Any departure of actual results from this middle estimate is more likely to be small than large."

The estimated 100,000 per day riders adds up to 36.5 million per year, at an average fare of $10.41. (When AHSRC first announced its Bullet Train plans, in 1982, the com-

pany estimated that up to 12 million riders per year would be garnered, or 30% of the total traffic along the L.A.-San Diego corridor. (See RTN 242.) Arthur D. Little's first study (reported in RTN 249) estimated that at least 20% of the total traffic would use the Bullet Train. The refined Arthur D. Little study announced here estimates that 3% of the 3.5 million daily trips within the general Interstate 5 corridor will go to the train. This percentage is much smaller, but the ridership is much larger. Evidently the assessments of total ridership in the corridor have increased significantly.

The $380 million per year in 1982 dollars translates to $610 million in 1989 dollars, the year that these projections focus upon. The exact number of 1989 riders per day is 101,784.

The day preceding this announcement, AHSRC announced that it was changing its route plans somewhat in the vicinity of the Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, between Oceanside and San Onofre. The planned line was moved closer to the existing I-5 freeway and the Santa Fe tracks, to eliminate interference with the base.This was done in consultation with environmental experts and staff officers of the base.



AMTRAK'S AUTO TRAIN has more northbound than southbound patronage at this time of the year. In the month of March, northbound business was heavy enough, especially around the end of the month, that two extra northbound runs were operated, on Mar 30 and on Apr 1—days on which no. 52 normally does not run. Therefore, during the dates Mar 29-Apr 1, the northbound operated daily out of Sanford. AUTO TRAIN watcher Robert Clark reports that the trainset of Mar 30 was identical to that of the previous day—16 passenger cars, 11 bilevel auto carriers and 10 trilevel carriers. He notes that the average consist for March was 14.3 passenger cars and 15.0 auto carriers. Amtrak's AUTO TRAIN patronage figures for March show that a total of 605 coach and 379 first class passengers were carried southbound, along with 480 autos, while northbound there were 2311 coach passengers, 1033 first class passengers, and 1782 automobiles. There were two days' worth of data missing from our figures for the northbound, so we extrapolated them from the remainder of the month. The average load northbound was 154 coach, 69 sleeper, and 119 autos, while southbound it was 46 coach, 29 sleeper and 37 autos. Mr. Clark reports that arrival times at Sanford in March varied from 8:10am to 12:05pm. The train was early 11 times and late three times.....

★★★

EMPIRE SERVICE TRAINS 62 and 65, which were to be discontinued west of Albany/Rensselaer on Apr 29, will be continued, thanks to a rather last-minute approval from the State of New York. There will be a schedule change with train 62, which will leave Niagara Falls at 2pm instead of 10am, and will arrive in New York at 10:14 pm. This is the NIAGARA RAINBOW, and it probably won't appear in the Apr 29 timetable. Another train that received a last-minute reprieve and may or may not appear in the timetable is the BEAR MOUNTAIN, train 71. The New York DOT announced on Mar 29 that Amtrak will continue the train at their request for a 90-day experimental period. Amtrak had planned to drop it because of low ridership. No one seemed to know exactly when the 90-day period begins, however. The train leaves New York's Grand Central Terminal at 7:30am, operating weekdays only. The train number will be changed to 57.....

THE GRAND CANYON will be reached by train again, starting next year and possibly as soon as Labor Day, 1984. Railroad Resources of Phoenix AZ and Del Webb Recreational Properties have teamed up to create a multi-million resort at the rim of the Grand Canyon, a distance of 64 miles from Williams AZ, where the Grand Canyon branch that Santa Fe has been trying to abandon, begins. The developers plan to run steam trains from Williams to the canyon, where the area will be restored to an authentic 19th-Century atmosphere. By summer of 1985, two daily roundtrips will be run, according to the developers. They hope to operate an inaugural run about Labor Day this year. Railroad Resources last year was given a contract by Santa Fe to tear up the 83-year old line, but instead the company began arranging its reincarnation. Williams AZ is on the route of Amtrak's SOUTHWEST LIMITED, with Flagstaff currently being the closest station stop.....

THE LEPRECHAUN LIMITED was the name of a special party train run on Mar 17, St. Patrick's Day, for a circle tour of St. Louis on the Missouri Pacific Railroad, sponsored by the American Association of Railroaders, Inc. Equipment was four Amtrak cars, and engine 227 was given a green nose and leprechaun insignia for the day, along with white extra flags with green shamrocks. The above photo, by Richard A. Eichhorst, was taken on the MoPac in Carondelet Park. The mainline railroad was in the process of being removed. In the background is the historic Kansas Street Bridge. Two hundred fifty passengers rode the special train.....

★★★

THE RIVER CITIES will be the name of Amtrak's newly extended Kansas City to St. Louis train, which with its extension to Centralia IL will link up with the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, providing direct Kansas City-New Orleans service. The startup of the train became official when the Amtrak board approved it at its Mar 22 meeting in Sanford FL. The service will begin Apr 29, and will use as equipment one or more MULE coaches plus a sleeping car, and a dome coach. The dome will be used at least thru the World's Fair period, Amtrak said, and when the train joins up with the already dome-provided CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, it will mean that that train will be operating with a pair of dome cars. The CITY will be using only two sets of equipment instead of the present three sets, evidently because of a 75-min later departure from New Orleans, which gives more time to turn and service the cars, so the extra dome will be available, and it will operate over the full route as far as Kansas City. As reported earlier in RTN, the CITY has received a service upgrading also, and it will receive a full-service dining car for the World's Fair period. The RIVER CITIES is expected to depart Kansas City at 3:30pm, St. Louis at 8:55pm, and arrive New Orleans at 12:30pm. New Orleans departure will be 4:45pm, arriving St. Louis 8:05am and Kansas City 1:45pm. The move between St. Louis and Centralia will be made on Southern Railway tracks.....

★★★

CHICAGO-GRAND RAPIDS service might begin in June. The Amtrak board on Mar 22 approved a contract with the state of Michigan for that 403-b service.....

THAT'S SHERLOCK HOLMES, Dr. Watson and an unidentified mystery woman waiting to board Amtrak's COAST STARLIGHT, eh what? These actors are participants in the Pickwick Club's "California Mystery Train", which runs periodically thru the spring and summer, traveling from Los Angeles to San Francisco, while murder mysteries are acted out on board the train and reach their culmination in San Francisco. Reserved cars accommodating 70 guests operate on the train. Among the mysteries coming up are The '06 Quake (Apr 14-15); The Noh-No Mysteries (Apr 28-29); The Big 4/Gold Spike (May 12-13); and The Memorial Day Mysteries (May 26-28). Cost is $388 and up for a 2-day adventure. Further information can be had from Mystery Train-T/C, 800 N. Tustin, Suite H, Santa Ana CA 92705.....

SAN DIEGO METROLINER service, which begins Apr 29, will use three 84-seat Amcoaches, and an Amdinette. Train 580, daily except Saturday, will leave L.A. at 4 pm, Anaheim at 4:41, Del Mar at 5:49, reaching San Diego at 6:30. Train 575 will depart San Diego daily except Sunday at 7:30am, Del Mar at 8am, Anaheim at 9:07am and reaching L.A. at 10:00. The trains will not operate on holiday weekends.....

★★★

FIVE AMTRAK DOMES, of the six being sold to the Alaska Railroad, traveled from Beech Grove to Chicago on train 317, the HOOSIER STATE, on Apr 1, presumably in preparation for delivery to Alaska. Consist of that train was: engines 280 and 293; cars 38023 Superliner diner, 38014 Superliner diner with new striping, 10400 wheel car, 21022 Amcoach, 20234 Amdinette, 21107 Amcoach, dome 9447 "Silver Mustang", dome 9448 "Silver Pony", dome 9456 "Silver Stirrup", dome 9451 "Silver Lodge", and dome 9446 "Silver Colt". The one dome not represented was 9450 "Silver Bridle" (see RTN 286).....

THE CAPITOL LIMITED will receive a slumbercoach May 15, removed from the SILVER STAR. The CITY OF NEW ORLEANS will also receive a slumbercoach starting southbound May 10 and northbound May 11; it will run between Chicago and New Orleans. Other equipment changes coming up: The CRESCENT will have a slumbercoach running New York-New Orleans starting Jun 1. The train will get an 11-bedroom sleeper Apr 29, running NY-New Orleans; this will be a car rebuilt for the AUTO TRAIN but not presently needed for it. The SILVER STAR will need only three equipment sets instead of four starting Apr 29, thanks to its new Florida switching arrangements. Passengers boarding the CRESCENT in New Orleans, traveling first class, will be able to occupy the thru L.A.-N.Y. sleeper the day before departure; westbound travelers boarding the SUNSET there can occupy the sleeper when it arrives from New York. All this starts Apr 29. When the GULF COAST LIMITED commences operation Apr 29, it is expected to use an approximately 10-car consist for the inaugural run—a mix of Heritage and Amfleet cars, tho it will normally use Amfleet and one P30 locomotive. The EMPIRE BUILDER this summer will have only one Seattle sleeper (plus one Portland sleeper). When the diner from the DESERT WIND begins running thru the Rockies on the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, this second diner on the train will serve tray meals rather than the regular meals, which will be served in the first diner. It is rumored that the SUNSET lounge car will run L.A.-New Orleans in addition to the EAGLE's lounge, so that the train will carry two lounge cars west of San Antonio.....

CHICAGO-FLORIDA TRIP will be possible to make easily after Apr 28, traveling via Alexandria VA, with tight connections in that city.....

SUPERLINER DINER 38030, badly damaged in the recent EAGLE wreck, will be rebuilt; originally, Amtrak had planned to scrap the car.....

ALL SUPERLINER DELUXE bedrooms have now been outfitted with operating showers, we are informed. Superliner diners are currently being worked on at Beech Grove, creating a shortage of them in some areas.....

SIX FRENCH TURBOLINERS, stored by Amtrak for some time, will be rebuilt with diesel engines substituted for the fuel-hungry turbines. The trains have suffered vandalization, but Amtrak decided it needs them, since the Empire Service route is suffering from equipment shortages. The rebuilding program is not of a very high priority, however, and will not begin at once.....

★★★

THE EMPIRE BUILDER wreck of Mar 15 caused $2.7 million damage to the train, reports NARP, not the $1.5 million of the first estimate (see last issue). Amtrak is suing the trucking company whose truck crossed in front of the train and created the collision. The assistant engineer said the truck driver crossed the track without ever looking right or left.....

SAN JOAQUIN ROUTE will have Amtrak equipment displays Apr 9 in Bakersfield, Apr 10 in Hanford, Apr 11 in Fresno, Apr 12 in Stockton and Apr 14 at the State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. Exhibits are in the afternoons, except 10-5 in Sacramento.

PROSPECTS FOR CONGRESSIONAL mandating of Oklahoma service or other specific services "do not look bright", said NARP after listenign to testimony by Graham Claytor and FRA Administrator Riley before Congressional subcommittees in late March. Claytor made a "very strong plea", NARP said, to a Senate subcommittee for Congress to refrain from interfering in " management decisions" such as that on Oklahoma service. Claytor spoke up against the passenger miles/train mile criterion, and in that he was supported by the FRA's Riley. Riley also supported Claytor in the matter of Oklahoma. Riley expressed his great satisfaction with Claytor's work, saying "There is nothing I could say that would add to the lustre of Graham's accomplishments. They speak pretty eloquently for themselves, but I do want to give special recognition to the fact that Amtrak in 1985 will run more route miles than it did in 1981 at approximately 28% lower funding." Members of the subcommittee echoed these sentiments. Claytor said that all long distance trains would pass the criteria in 1984, tho the CARDINAL and PIONEER are slightly below the PM/TM requirement. Claytor defended the trains and criticized the criterion. In short distance, he said Portland-Seattle is weak and will miss both criteria, but he thinks he can vastly improve the service in 1985. The said the HOOSIER STATE has problems, but the train should be kept because it saves Amtrak a lot of money in hauling its cars to and from Beech Grove.....

CLEVELAND-PITTSBURGH ROUTES will be surveyed by Amtrak Apr 10-11: the B&O via Akron, Conrail via Youngstown, and Conrail via Ravena.....

ATLANTIC CITY RECEIVED an environmental approval and an okay for a casino to construct a railroad terminal, both in late March.....

News in this issue is updated thru April 6, 1984.

ST. PAT'S AT ST. BARBARA'S (continued from page 11)

right, where a miniature railroad was set up and a gentleman was riding on the tender of a small steam engine, for the possibly planned entertainment of our train's passengers.

After a spectacular sunset over Salinas, the sky darkened and we drew ever nearer the end of our journey—possibly the most perfect Amtrak ride we'd ever had. We were very pleased to see the great improvement in on-board services on this train. While SP's slow speeds and sometimes washboard track are annoying, the feature that will really make for repeat business is the good treatment passengers were receiving on board the big, filled-to-capacity train.

At four minutes before 9:00 o'clock we eased up to the Oakland station for a one-minute early arrival and the end of our St. Patrick's weekend Amtrak adventure.

CARS & CONSISTS

*Ringling Bros., Barnum & Bailey circus train, Apr 2, enroute to Sunnyside Yards NY via Penn Station, 2:30pm: Amtrak E60 engines 952, 951, 954; Ringling Bros. cars baggage-animal cars 130, 131, 132, 133, passanger cars 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, generator car 94, psgr cars 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, baggage 100, truck-trailer flat cars 106, 109, 108, 129, 101, 102, 105, 104, 111, Conrail caboose 21032.

*SILVER METEOR, train 87, New York Apr 2: E60 engine 975; cars 1206, 1618, 25036, 25026, 25029, 25008, 28020, 2092 "Loch Arkaig", 2476 "Sarasota", 2888, 8505, 2995 "Pine Brook", 28021, 25071.

*CRESCENT, train 19, New York Apr 2: AEM-7 locomotives 930, 905; cars 1256, 1621, 2881, 4649, 4718, 4019, 8512, cafe 20217, 21205, 21108, 21845, 21854.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Apr 28-29: St. Louis-Kansas City RT, overnite in K.C. at Westin Crown Center. Limit 70. Skytop obs car & ex-ATSF full length dome. Full course dinner aboard, bkfst & luncheon on return trip. $158 up. American Assn of Railroaders Inc, 3422 Osage, St. Louis MO 63118.

Apr 29: Spring RR Extravaganza, over 100 tables RR memorabilia; models, door prizes. $2. 10am-4pm at Boys' & Girls' Club of Union, Jeanette Ave, Union NJ. Tri-State Railway Historical Society, Inc, PO Box 2243, Clifton NJ 07015. 201-857-2987.

Apr 29: Inaugural run of River Cities Route. Lv St Louis 8:55pm (ceremony 8:30), return 12:45am. $25 ($20 kids). Civic ceremony before first run. Reserved Amfleet coaches; bus return to St Louis. Amer. Assn of Railroaders Inc,, 3422 Osage, St Louis MO 63118.

May 20: Harrisburg PA-West Point. Lv 5:30am, back 5pm. $47 RT. At Elizabeth NJ train lvs Corridor for West Point, met by buses. 4-hr tour of West Point. Bring food; no alcohol. Lancaster Chap, NRHS, 342 W. Fritz Ave, Quarryville PA 17566.

May 25-28: 4449 steam Houston-Dallas, incl jet from and to St Louis. Two overnites Houston, one in Dallas. $525-635 (air fare may increase Apr 1). Phone 752-3148. American Association of Railroaders Inc, 3422 Osage Street, St. Louis MO 63118.

Jun 11: Traction fantrip: chartered 6-hr tour over Chicago CTA with 1926 Cincinnati-built heavyweights 4271 & 4272. $10. Limited space. Rocky Mountain RR Club, c/o Erwin Chaim, VP, 560 Emerson St, Denver CO 80218.

Jun 24: Harrisburg Express, 1-day RT excursion Newark-Harrisburg via ex-Lehigh Valley (main line), Reading and PRR. over 350 mis, spectacular vistas rural NJ & PA Dutch countryside. $40.Tri-State Rwy Hist. Soc., PO Box 2243, Clifton NJ 07015. 201-857-2987.

Send large SASE when responding to listings. One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

TO THE U.S. Secretary of Transportation: I hereby petition the Secretary under 5 U.S.C. 555(e) to state by published order or rule (1) whether the two individuals appointed by the Secretary to the Amtrak board of directors under 45 U.S.C. 543(a)(1)(E) are in fact subordinates and agents of the Secretary; (2) whether Mrs. Crete B. Harvey of Illinois and Mr. Ralph T. Kerchum of California constitute "officers" and "employees" of the United States pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2104 and 2105; (3) what their specific powers, duties and responsibilities are; and (4) whether or not they actually function under the supervision of the Federal Railroad Administrator. Alfred E. Ehm, San Antonio, Texas.

MISSOURI/KANSAS RAIL PASSENGER COALITION (MOKSRail). Join an active and growing organization dedicated to improved and expanded Amtrak service. $10 yearly dues include bi-monthly newsletter. Send a long SASE for free newsletter and brochure. Send to "Membership Comm." MOKSRail, PO Box 1192, Kansas City MO 64141.

ANNOUNCING Volume TWO of Matthews's NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RAILROADS: The Silver Age, 1945-1960. Covers SP Coast and Shasta Routes, WP/GN Bieber, Shortlines, NWP, Streamliners, Oakland Pier/ferries, Final days of steam. Limited edition, ready about June, 48 color, 213 b&w, text, 8x11 hardbound. Some copies Vol. One (electrics, std pass trains, Valley, Sierra, desert) still available, $32 bookstores or Sundance Publications, 250 Broadway, Denver CO 80203.

EXPRESS ADS

AMTRAK—VIA RAIL CANADA—EURAILPASS—OCEAN LINER CRUISES—RAIL TOURS—RAIL EXCURSIONS—CHARTER RAIL CARS. Arrangements by phone or appointment—use your credit card—tickets mailed promptly. A fully appointed travel agency with masters of ship and rail travel. GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, 639 Market Street, San Francisco CA 94105. (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long 37¢ stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

GISELLE'S TRAVEL CORP at 1215 4th St. Sacramento CA 95814, Phone: (916) 446-1211 offers rail tickets on AMTRAK—VIA (CANADA)—EURAILPASS along with tours and accommodations in cities to which you are traveling. Let Giselle's help you take your next memorable rail trip.

RAIL TOURS: England, France, Spain, Canada. Summer 1984. Small groups. Write: Rail/Road Tours, Hyde Park Travel Bureau, P.O. Box 24, Hyde Park, MA 02136.

STAMFORD CT Aug 10-11 1984. Annual convention and show of the National Association of Timetable Collectors. Friday Aug 10: open to NAOTC members and registered dealers ONLY, Saturday Aug 11 open to the public from 9am to 3pm. Over 60 tables available to NAOTC Members and Railroad paper dealers ONLY. Complete details from Max Brunswick, Chairman, 155 West Rock Avenue, New Haven CT 06515. The location will be the modern Marriott Hotel, next to Amtrak/Metro North rail station in Stamford. Plan to attend America's largest paper-only show. Saturday admission $2 per person. The NAOTC Annual Convention is held in the Northeast only once every three years. Don't wait till 1987 to see this outstanding sale of rail, trolley, bus, air timetables, Employee Timetables, Guides, Postcards and all transportation paper.

SEVENTH GREAT PACIFIC COAST RAILROADIANA COLLECTOR'S SHOW and Sale, Saturday, May 12, 1984. Capitol Plaza Holiday Inn, 300 J St, Sacramento CA (near State Railroad Museum). Hours 10am to 4pm. Seller tables $25 each. Admission $1.50. Contact Roy Gabriel, National Association of Timetable Collectors, Box 981, Sacramento CA 95805, phone 916-485-2800.

Boston & Maine, Frisco, Pennsylvania and New York Susquehanna & Western uniform button blazer sets. Two large, six small, $5.95 or all four sets $20.95. Joseph Lajoie, P. O. Box 3, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

"THE SHEER BEAUTY OF THE PHOTOS DOMINATES THE BOOK....such dazzling color when there were so few color photos taken at the time....the general comprehensiveness of the superb photography." Laurence Veysey, on Vol. I of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RAILROADS: The Silver Age 1945-1960. 224 pp, hardcover, 48 full color, 160 b&w, area maps, historical text. $32 at bookstores or from Sundance Publications, 250 Broadway, Denver 80203

ONE OF THE WORLD'S last great train rides—the Kyle of Lochalsh. England and Scotland by rail. Sightseeing. Historic hotels. All meals (except London). Contact Herb Rowan,Giselle's Travel, Inc., 5667 Freeport Blvd., Sacramento CA 95822; phone: (916) 421-6616.

Oklahoma shouldn't be required to pay for a train when N. Mex., Colo., Ariz., Nev., Ida., Utah & Oreg....all with less population...have two federally funded trains, each. The brow-beating Oklahoma has taken from Amtrak provides further proof that the 403-b program amounts to nothing more than blackmail and extortion to make certain that the rest of the nation has to pay for the services the Northeast Corridor receives, abundantly, and for free. 403-b should be abolished.

Keep up with news about the Empire Builder, the North Star, 403(b) service and general coverage. Minnesota Rail Passenger News, 6/year for $5.00 from: MinnARP (RTN), Box 375, Minneapolis MN 55440-0375.

"Issues in American Rail Travel," RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & post. Full details given later in RTN. PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads cost just $1 per line of 80 spaces (Capital letters take up more than one space, so please allow extra room). Display ads are only $1.25 per square inch. Send your order now to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

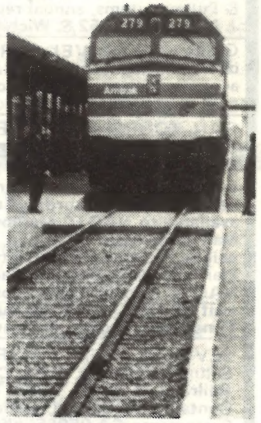
"The Board of Directors, management and staff are convinced that Canada's passenger railway system can be rebuilt, modernized and realigned to meet the contemporary needs of Canadians into the twenty-first century. All are eager to rise to this challenge. It has the scent of history in the making."

—VIA Rail Canada President Pierre Franche in VIA's 1983 Annual Report.

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

FEBRUARY 1984 DATA
(First column is no. of riders; second is % change from 1983)

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR		
METROLINERS	96,653	30.9
NE CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL	462,510	6.4
NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD	19,158	16.1
NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA	191,854	11.8
PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG	60,486	-4.6
TOTAL NE CORRIDOR	830,661	9.3
SHORT DISTANCE		
NEW YORK-ALBANY-NIAGARA FALLS	65,211	17.0
CHICAGO-ST. LOUIS	18,576	12.9
CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE	9,976	5.6
CHICAGO-DETROIT-TOLEDO	23,119	-6.8
CHICAGO-CARBONDALE	10,857	1.1
CHICAGO-QUINCY	5,233	1.0
LOS ANGELES-SAN DIEGO	85,812	6.2
SEATTLE-PORTLAND	5,866	108.9
WASHINGTON-MARTINSBURG	12,409	-19.8
OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD	15,586	37.3
NEW YORK-MONTREAL	4,326	4.8
CHICAGO-PT. HURON-(TORONTO)	6,669	-6.0
MINNEAPOLIS-DULUTH	2,941	38.2
CHICAGO-VALPARAISO	18,687	1.3
CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS	3,241	22.9
CHICAGO-KANSAS CITY	7,025	7.5
PITTSBURGH-PHILADELPHIA-NYC	7,690	58.9
LOS ANGELES-SACRAMENTO	--	-100.0
MIAMI-TAMPA	5,198	11.4
TOTAL SHORT DISTANCE	308,422	6.8
LONG DISTANCE		
WASHINGTON-MONTREAL	7,607	-10.6
NEW YORK-FLORIDA	47,098	-13.1
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/WASHINGTON	15,641	7.8
CHICAGO-CIN-WAS-NEW YORK	3,080	-0.6
CHICAGO-SEATTLE/PORTLAND	27,183	27.8
CHICAGO-OAKLAND/L.A./SEATTLE	54,710	38.7
CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES	13,902	19.6
CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS	12,165	6.2
CHI/NEW ORLEANS-LOS ANGELES	11,644	60.4
LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE	33,416	40.6
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON	24,108	21.4
BOSTON-NEWPORT NEWS	4,723	1.6
NEW YORK-SAVANNAH	7,272	-3.0
NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS	15,267	7.6
AUTO TRAIN (LORTON-SANFORD)	3,354	0.0
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	281,170	16.5
SPECIAL TRAINS	11,840	22.4
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,432,093	10.2



Here are the Amtrak ridership figures for February. See last issue for January figures.

Overall ridership was up 10.2%, compared to a 9.5% rise in January. Every category of patronage was up, with long distance again leading the way with a 22.4% increase.

Total systemwide ridership was 1,432,093 compared with 1,299,701 in the comparison month, Feb 1983.

For the current fiscal year, last Oct thru Feb, ridership was up 10.5%. NE Corridor was up 7.5%, short distance up 10.2%, and long distance up 18.9%. Special trains were up 51.0%. Total systemwide ridership so far this fiscal year was 7,829,431 compared to 7,083,715 for the same period of the 1983 fiscal year.

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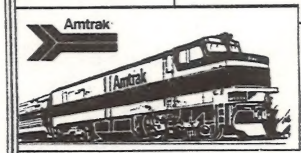

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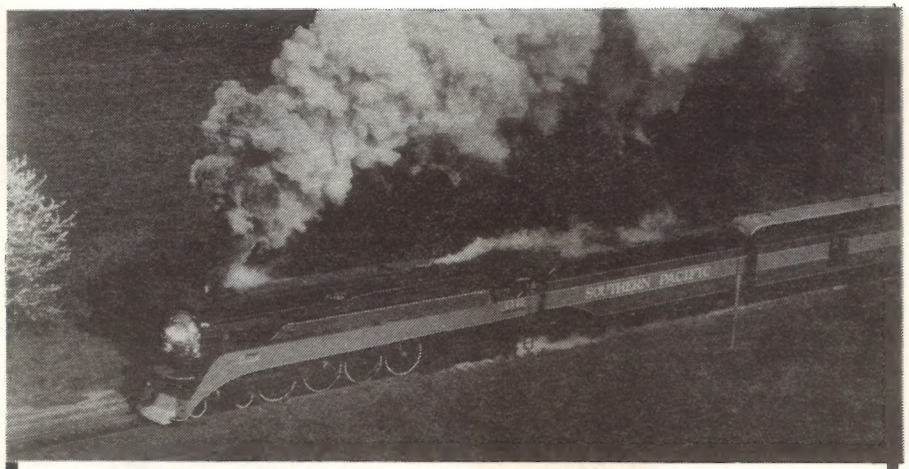

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